

January 16, 1987

TO: File

FROM: Frank Filas, Reclamation Engineer

RE: Permitting of the Firefly Mine, ACT/037/002, and the Blue Cap Mine, ACT/037/030, San Juan County, Utah

These two underground uranium mines located on unpatented BLM claims were in operation many years prior to the passage of the Mined Land Reclamation Act. These mines are relatively small but at no time in the permitting history did anyone map out what area was impacted prior to the Act or what area was being used after 1977. The problems associated with mine drainage existed prior to the Act and probably exist today to some extent. The mines have been inactive since 1982 and most likely will remain that way for some time to come. In both cases it would be extremely time consuming and probably fruitless to require any one to assume the reclamation responsibility.

The following is a summary of the permitting history of each of the files referenced above. In both cases I recommended to the current lease holder, Douglas Cleghorn, that he file a DOE form with the Division. I also told him that the Division would probably accept the DOE if a site inspection by the BLM found no major hazards on site. Having a DOE on file will allow us to keep in touch with the lease holder and keep him up to date on the new laws affecting small mine reclamation.

Blue Cap Mine, ACT/037/030

This mine is located on BLM land next to the abandoned Black Hat Mine. It is near the Colorado border and just north of Highway 46. Lark Washburn of Cleghorn and Washburn Mining Co. filed a Notice of Intent on December 7, 1977 for the operation. The MR-1 listed the mining operation area as less than 3 acres plus 1/2 mile of access road. Washburn and Cleghorn were leasing the claims from GeoEnergy Resources of Orem, Utah and were in the process of reactivating old workings.

Development work was noted during an April, 1978 Division inspection and a MR-2 form was requested from the operator. The inspection also noted that an ephemeral stream was undercutting a large spoil dump. A completed MR-2 was received May 15, 1978, but it was never reviewed.

A May, 1982 field inspection revealed that Washburn was no longer associated with the company and that Doug Cleghorn was the operator. The mine had been operating continuously for about two years and five months at that time and employed six people. Post 1977 surface development consisted of a portal, a magazine storage, an office, and waste disposal on the south end of the 25 year old Black Hat spoil pile. The problem with the undercutting of the toe of the waste pile was again noted plus a minor discharge of water was observed from the Blue Cap Mine. Mr Cleghorn was requested in July, 1982 to resubmit a MR-1 application and to sample the water discharge.

Bryce Cleghorn (Doug Cleghorn's son) of Cleghorn Mining Co. was contacted on January 9, 1986. He stated that the mine shut down in 1982 and has been inactive since that time. He stated that the portal was secured and that he was unaware of any mine water discharge. Bryce also stated that he did not know how the old waste dumps could ever be reclaimed since they were located on such a steep slope.

Firefly Mine, ACT/037/002

The Firefly Mine is located next to Highway 46, approximately 10 miles east of LaSal. The Division first inspected this underground uranium mine on April 14, 1977 after a BLM employee expressed concern over a water discharge from the mine. An estimated 3 to 5 gpm of water was draining from the inactive mine, across the waste dumps, and eventually into the LaSal Creek.

In 1978 the Division received a MR-2 from Cleghorn and Washburn Mining Co. for the Firefly. The claim owners were listed as being GeoEnergy Resources of Salt Lake City. The MR-2 was never reviewed and it is unclear whether Cleghorn and Washburn conducted any mining at the site.

A July, 1980 Division inspection revealed that Idaho Mining Co. was operating the mine on a lease from GeoEnergy Resources. After a May, 1981 citizens complaint about a muddy discharge from the Firefly, State Health requested that the water discharge be stopped immediately. At that time there were two separate companies subleasing the claims and using the same portal. State Health addressed letters to both companies (W.K. Enterprises - Wilene Shumway, and M.E. Mining - Virgil Ellis) concerning the water discharge and the Division requested a permit application from each.

Neither party responded to these letters and a follow up six months later revealed that M.E. Mining was no longer mining at the Firefly Mine. W.K. Enterprises was again sent letters by both State Health and the Division. There is no written response in the files by W.K. Enterprises, but it appears that the Shumways were contacted by phone and that the mining operation was shutdown during that time period.

The Division never received a permit application other than the MR-2 from Cleghorn and Washburn in 1978 and no site inspection ever documented the surface disturbance caused by any of the companies associated with the mine operation. Cleghorn Mining Co. reacquired the lease after the other operators discontinued mining and has kept the mine on standby since that time. Bryce Cleghorn stated on January 9, 1986 that the portals are secure and that he believes that the discharge water is being diverted around the waste piles.

0998R-pgs. 19 to 21

cc: W. Hedberg
L. Braxton